

# The Messenger

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2018: A Year of Marriage

## **MAY: Will I Be Married Someday, and How Do I Get Ready Now?**

This month's installment in our 2018 series about marriage is addressed especially to unmarried people wanting to be married. Does that describe you? If so, read on. If not, please read on anyway; there is plenty here for your own edification, or to share with other people.

The reader should know up front that I have about two decades of experience wishing to be married but not being married (my entire twenties and thirties). Since God blessed me with my wife Dawn in 2011, I no longer think much about those single days, but for the purposes of this month's article I will draw on my memories and lessons learned. Most of all I will draw on the Word of God, which is our guide in life, our comfort in sorrow, and our strength in weakness.

In previous articles I have talked about God being the author of marriage (Genesis 1-2), and what blessings God intends to give to those who are married. That can be hard to hear when you are not married but want to be! "When will those blessings be for me?" you may wonder. You may have heard, as I did many times during my single years, comments from well-meaning family or friends: "She's out there, just be patient." Or: "You'll meet the one when the time is right." Or: "God has someone in mind for you." I think more helpful words of encouragement would have been: "God knows everything you need (Mt. 6:8) and He loves you (Jer. 31:3). You are His baptized child (1 John 3:1). Trust God and pray, knowing that He will give you whatever is good for you (Mt. 7:7-11; Rom. 8:32)." Such words stop short of *assuring* a person of something that we have no business assuring people of. We may and should assure people of God's love in Christ, His faithfulness to His promises, and His unfailing care for His children. But whether a person will definitely be married in the future we simply do not know.

That said, God's Word does make clear that God intends marriage to remedy our aloneness (Gen. 2:18: "Then the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'") So, if you desire a spouse, know that this is not strange or wrong, and it is not sin; on the contrary, it is a desire created into you by God, your Maker! Now, it is also true that the Bible commends the single life (meaning one who is unmarried and does not engage in sexual activity) as a life in which one can be devoted to the kingdom of God without distraction (1 Cor. 7:32-35). If this describes you, and you find yourself content and at peace, give thanks and praise to God. However, concerning this life Jesus Himself clearly teaches that it is only possible with divine help: "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given" (Mt. 7:11). The ability to remain single, not engage in sex, and be content—this ability, as our Lutheran Confessions emphasize, comes only as "a unique gift" from God, not by natural human ability (AC XXIII, 5-8). If you do not believe you have this gift, talk to your loving heavenly Father about your desire to be married (which He instilled in you!). Holy Scripture does commend marriage with the clearest words: "And God blessed [Adam and Eve]. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply'" (Gen. 1:28). Also: "It is better to marry than to burn with passion" (1 Cor. 7:9).

**Therefore a man shall leave his father  
and his mother and hold fast to his wife,  
and they shall become one flesh.**

**-Genesis 2:24 ESV**

Now, if you have been in prayer to God about finding a spouse and getting married, then be assured that God has heard your prayer. In that confidence, “Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the LORD!” (Psalm 31:24; also Lam. 3:25-26). And while you wait, consider the following recommendations for how you may get ready for marriage now (the first item being the most important):

1. As a baptized child of God, nurture your relationship with God by faithfully using the means of grace, the Word and Sacraments. As a single person, are you going to church regularly? When you go, are you devoutly hearing the Word of God? Do you have a discipline of personal devotions, including reading the Bible and praying? These are God’s ways of keeping you connected with Jesus, your source of life. As our Lord said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). Focusing on Christ in this way as a single person will also help ensure that the spouse you are seeking never becomes an idol in your heart. “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of...slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exodus 20:2-3).
2. Invest yourself in relationships with those around you—especially in your church, and with your family, as well as outside these spheres. Through the give and take of relationships we mature, shed selfish tendencies, grow more self-confident, and most importantly, exercise our faith, and progress in Christian love. Devoting yourself to others and their needs also helps prevent you from being consumed or obsessed with your desire to have a spouse (see comment in #1 about idolatry).
3. See society’s push for people to engage in sexual activity outside of marriage as the satanic lie that it is. We far too readily accept society’s values. Instead we should listen to the Word of God. 1 Corinthians 6:13 says: “The body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.” 1 Thessalonians 4:1 says, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality...”
4. Through confession and absolution gain a peaceful conscience about your sexual sins. None of us has been pure sexually, just as we have not kept all the other commandments. And the devil is a master at attacking the conscience. If he does not succeed in his first (and today his most common) approach of getting you to shrug your shoulders about sexual sins as though they were just fine and “what’s the big deal?” then Satan will take the opposite tack and pin your conscience to the ground with searing accusations of all your ungodly deeds, words, thoughts, and desires. You must learn to counter both strategies of the devil with the Word of God. Do not “call evil good and good evil” or “put darkness for light and light for darkness...bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter” (Isaiah 5:20) but admit sin for what it is (1 John 1:8-9). If you are engaging in sexual relations, cease! If you are indulging sexual lusts in any way, repent! Then let the devil’s attacks be totally vanquished as you unburden your conscience through confession. Your pastor is given to you by God to speak Christ’s own forgiveness into your ears. Find out for yourself, as this man did in my single years, how consoling, healing, and empowering such individual absolution is.

More suggestions could be given, but this is a good start. I would be delighted to discuss further the thoughts put forward in this article. In the love of Jesus,

*Pastor Groth*



## THOSE SERVING IN MAY

### Ushers

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Dan Adams

Scott Davidson

Roger Ruff

Fred Brechbuhl

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### Elders

5/6            Cal Meisner & Rick Mericle

5/13          Cliff Evans & Mike Brown

5/20          Cal Meisner & Rick Mericle

5/27          Cliff Evans & Mike Brown

### Acolytes

5/6            Joey Weinstock

5/13          Damien & Bradley Dittrich

5/20          Nicholas Little

5/27          Joey Weinstock

### Altar Guild

Martha Vinqvist and Judy Werner





### Concerning the Six-Day Creation

Just as science will forever have a problem with Jesus being God and man, with His virgin birth, or with His resurrection, so science will forever scoff at or, at best, view the creation in Genesis as mythology. How can we possibly hold to an actual creation of all things in six natural days?

The LCMS's classic statement on creation was made a long time ago in 1932, and it still holds today:

We teach that God has created heaven and earth, and that in the manner and in the space of time recorded in Holy Scriptures, especially Genesis 1 and 2, namely by His almighty creative word and in six days. We reject every doctrine which denies or limits the work of creation as taught in Scripture. In our days, it is denied or limited by those who assert, ostensibly in deference to science, the world came into existence through a process of evolution; that is, that has in immense periods of time, developed more or less of itself. Since no man was present when it pleased God to create the world, we must look for a reliable account of creation, to God's own record, found in God's own book, the Bible. We accept God's own record with full confidence, and confess with Luther's Catechism: "I believe that God has made me and all creatures."

Over the centuries, there have been a plethora of attempts to alleviate the "scandal" of creation accounts and to understand them in a way that is less offensive to human reason. Can we somehow stretch the meaning of a "day" in Genesis 1 into an eon or long period of time?

You simply cannot stretch the days of Genesis 1 into eons in order to somehow accommodate science or evolutionary theory (or even some version of old Earth Creationism based on a non-literal understanding of a "day") in any meaningful or coherent way. Either the account in Genesis 1-2 is myth, or it is history. There is no middle ground.

We believe that creation accounts are historical because we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior. We hear the words of Scripture (Matt. 19:3-9). We hear the words of our Savior. Both He and the Scripture bear witness to their absolute inerrancy and infallibility. If we do not comprehend the reason for this, let us remain pupils and leave the job of teacher to the Holy Spirit.

What about our faithful scientists and others who struggle with these issues? There will always be a struggle between faith and reason. In matters of clear teaching of the Bible, I must hold to the Scripture. However, there are many disciplines that operate under the category of reason, e.g., the scientific method, etc. And many Christian scientists have and will continue to make arguments based upon their best scientific inquiry to defend the historicity or the very reasonable possibility of the Bible's accounts being true. That's called apologetics. More power to them. Nevertheless, the truths of Holy Scripture – and that includes God's creation of everything ("out of nothing") – are most often well beyond human reason.

Written by Pastor Matthew C. Harrison (President, LC-MS)  
Submitted by Cliff Evans, elder



### May Birthdays

May	4	Dan Weinstock
	7	Jim Phillips
	15	Jackie Dittrich
	17	Carolyn Lehenbauer
	19	Gene Sylvester
	20	Dave Esslinger
	24	Bob Davis Judy Werner
	25	Geri Albrecht
	26	Billy Griffin
	28	Bev Baldwin Sue Evans
	29	Rick Mericle
	31	Tom Ulrich



### May Anniversaries

May	1	John & Elaine Brinkey
	26	Bob & Sandy Akmenkalns
	28	Neil & Evlyn LaVoy



Freddy and the Lord stood by to observe a baseball game. The Lord's team was playing Satan's team.

The Lord's team was at bat, the score was tied zero to zero, and it was the bottom of the 9th inning with two outs. They continued to watch as a batter stepped up to the plate named "Love."

Love swung at the first pitch and hit a single, because "Love never fails."

The next batter was named Faith, who also got a single because Faith works with Love.

The next batter up was named Godly Wisdom. Satan wound up and threw the first pitch.

Godly Wisdom looked it over and let it pass: ball one. Three more pitches and Godly Wisdom walked because he never swings at what Satan throws.

The bases were now loaded. The Lord then turned to Freddy and told him He was now going to bring in His star player. Up to the plate stepped Grace. Freddy said, "He sure doesn't look like much!"

Satan's whole team relaxed when they saw Grace. Thinking there was no way he could lose, Satan wound up and fired his first pitch. To the shock of everyone, Grace hit the ball harder than anyone had ever seen! However, Satan was not worried; his center fielder let very few get by.

He went up for the ball, but it went right through his glove, hit him on the head and sent him crashing on the ground; the roaring crowds went wild as the ball continued over the fence for a home run!

The Lord's team won!

The Lord then asked Freddy if he knew why Love, Faith, and Godly Wisdom could get on base but couldn't win the game. Freddy answered that he didn't know why.

The Lord explained, "If your love, faith, and wisdom had won the game, you would think you had done it by yourself. Love, Faith, and Wisdom will get you on base, but only My Grace can get you Home.

"For by Grace are you saved, it is a gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

"For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly." Psalm 84:11

## “Beautiful Savior Prays” Begins May 15

You are invited to take part in a new prayer initiative at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church & School. The midpoint of each month, the 15<sup>th</sup> day, is hereby designated as “Beautiful Savior Prays” day. For too long the 15<sup>th</sup> has been associated in our minds with that dreary tax day in April. Let’s switch our thinking by setting aside every 15<sup>th</sup> of the month as a day of prayer. From wherever you are, devote some quiet time on May 15<sup>th</sup> to prayer, or come to the sanctuary if you wish. This is certainly not intended to be a substitute for the kind of daily prayer that is the privilege and duty of every baptized child of God. Instead, it is one day of special celebration and “coming together” across our whole church and school campus, as we call on God together, through His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit. Prayer suggestions will be forthcoming, to prompt and guide your prayer. Hereafter each month on the 15<sup>th</sup> we will join hearts and hands as “Beautiful Savior Prays”.



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### Military Bible Stick Project for May

Once again this year we have the opportunity to make contributions to the New Mexico-based organization Faith Comes by Hearing as they provide a unique resource to our troops, the Military Bible Stick. This compact electronic device allows service members to listen to the entire New Testament and selected Psalms. By hearing the Word of God our soldiers are called by the Holy Spirit and strengthened in faith in Jesus Christ, so that they may have comfort and peace as they carry out their important duties. Contact the church office to learn how you can make a contribution and how you can specially honor a beloved friend or family member who has served or is serving our country in the armed forces.



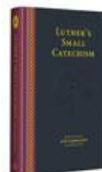
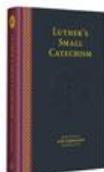
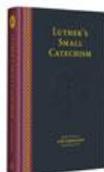
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### Have You Seen the 2017 Catechism?

Some of you may have joined me this Easter season in the Fifty Days reading plan, walking through the new edition of Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation, from CPH. If so, you know what a gem we have in this new catechetical and devotional tool. The revisions to the Explanation section are simply outstanding.

So that everyone may have a chance to delve into the 2017 Catechism, a series of Sunday morning Adult Bible studies are being planned (probably for the fall), in which we will work through the new catechism together. It will help you immensely in your faith and life, in your service and in your witness to our Savior, Jesus Christ.

For information about how you may purchase a 2017 Catechism, call the church office.





## ***“The Lutheran Hour”***

### **Sermon Schedule for May 2018**

LHM produces and airs radio and TV programming around the world in more than 80 languages. ***“The Lutheran Hour”*** began in 1930 and is the world’s longest-running, continually broadcast Gospel radio program. It proclaims the message of Jesus Christ to more than 1 million people every week on more than 1800 North American radio stations! Please tune to **850 KOA (AM)** at

**6:00 a.m.** on **Sunday** mornings OR go on-line to hear and/or download the current or any of the previous messages at: **[www.lutheranhour.org](http://www.lutheranhour.org)**

**May 6<sup>th</sup>**      ***“Love One Another as I Have Loved You”*** (John 15:9-17)  
Jesus calls His followers to be different as they deal with difficult people.  
(Guest Speaker: **Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer**)

**May 13<sup>th</sup>**      ***“Keep Them”*** (John 17:14-17)  
There are times Christians might readily wish the Lord would airlift them out of this world. Because we have some work to do, the Lord Jesus prays we be kept safe. So, how’s that working for you? (Lutheran Hour Speaker Emeritus: **Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus**)

**May 20<sup>th</sup>**      ***“Functional Atheist No More!”*** (Acts 2:1-21; John 15:26-27)  
Christians like to think of themselves as following the first disciples. That’s uncomfortably true. The first disciples had trouble believing the promises of Jesus for their daily lives. Too often we do too. On Pentecost the Spirit of the risen Lord Jesus gave the first disciples faith like they had never had before. Today the same Spirit is ready to do the same for us.  
(Guest Speaker: **Rev. Dr. Dale A. Meyer**)

**May 27<sup>th</sup>**      ***“Impossible”*** (Acts 2:22-24)  
Can death hold us? Experience says, “Yes!” the Apostle Peter says, “No!” Today’s sermon talks about making possible that which can’t happen  
(Lutheran Hour Speaker Emeritus: **Rev. Dr. Ken Klaus**)

Please contact Mike Brown at (303) 438-5766 or [mbrown\\_llrmd@comcast.net](mailto:mbrown_llrmd@comcast.net) with any questions you may have about ***“The Lutheran Hour”*** or any of the **Outreach** and **Training Resources** available from **LHM**.

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***Lutheran Hour Ministries*** is a congregational outreach ministry supporting The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and partnering churches worldwide. It is independently funded by generous Christians who want to spread the pure and powerful message of our Savior’s love in their own communities and throughout the world. For more information, please visit [www.lhm.org](http://www.lhm.org) or call **1-800-876-9880**. **THANK YOU!**

## *Our Stewardship Message*

(May 2018)



St. Paul teaches, “Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches” (*Galatians 6:6*).

And again, he says, “Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (*1 Corinthians 9:13–14*).

In other words, ministers of the gospel are supported by the offerings of those who are served by them. And this is how the Church lives even now. It is standard practice.

But this deserves closer examination. For it instructs us not *just* that we are to give but also *what* we are to give. And it does so with four little words: “In the same way ...”

St. Paul is building his case for supporting the preachers of the Gospel with the sacrificial giving of individual members on the example of the Old Testament people who supported the Levites with their offerings and sacrifices.

We’re to support the Gospel ministry “in the same way.” But how did the Old Testament people support the Levites?

Moses records this: “You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. And before the Lord your God, in the place that He will choose, to make His name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always” (*Deuteronomy 14:22–23*).

The Levites were supported by the tithe, 10 percent of all the yearly yield of that which was harvested.

Does that seem like a lot? Does it surprise you that St. Paul instructs us that we are to support the New Testament Gospel ministry “in the same way?”

If it does, ask yourself: is the Church’s job in the New Testament bigger or smaller than the Levites’ job in the Old Testament? Back then there was one Temple, and the ministry was almost exclusively located in one nation among the descendants of Abraham.

Jesus calls us to teach and baptize all nations (*Matt. 28*). And there are churches and ministries all around the world. How could we support this new Gospel ministry with anything less than the Israelites supported the Old Testament ministry?

Of course, we are free to give more, for we have received more than those in the Old Testament. We have received the fullness of God’s revelation, the fullness of His salvation, the fulfillment of everything that God promised to do.

For we have received Christ, God’s own Son, in the flesh, Who took upon Himself our sins and in exchange gave us His righteousness. The Father claimed us as His own in Holy Baptism.

He gathers us together in the place where His name dwells to feast on the first fruits of the resurrection, the risen and living body and blood of His Son, our Lord, Jesus. He reminds us that we are His, that all things are ours because we belong to Him. He blesses us here in time with physical and spiritual gifts.

In the same way, and in response to His fatherly divine goodness and mercy, we gladly give to those who proclaim to us “the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness and into His marvelous light.”

For once we were not a people, but now we are God’s people; once we had not received mercy, but now we have indeed (*1 Peter 2:9–10*).

*We are “Consecrated Stewards” to the Glory of God!*



*“In grateful response to God’s grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit through the Word and Sacraments, the mission of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is to vigorously make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities and the world.” (LCMS Mission Statement – 2010)*

**Dear Family in Christ:**

Reading the Bible is the way we receive communication from our Lord. Just like checking your e-mail or voice mail for messages, the Bible is where God has provided His messages to be written down for us to learn from Him. In addition to Pastor Groth’s frequent messages to us about being “in the Word”, perhaps you will find, as I did, the following article from Rev. Harrison to be very encouraging and motivational to always be “Back to the Bible”!

**I CHALLENGE YOU TO READ THE BIBLE**

(By:Rev. Matthew C. Harrison, President; Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod - Lutheran Witness, April 2018)

Freidrich Pfothenauer was president of the LCMS from 1911 to 1935. In 1897, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Synod, he was president of the Minnesota and Dakota District. He said the following to the gathered district pastors and laypeople:

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“Finally, we have cause to celebrate our synodical jubilee with fear and trembling when we glance at the present condition of our Synod. **It is true, we still have the very precious treasure, the pure Word of God.** As a rule, it still governs our congregations, but it cannot be denied that we are no longer what our fathers were. Indeed, **the symptoms of decline are evident and increasing among us. I will only point out a few. The holy zeal to study and grow in God’s Word has declined markedly among both preachers and hearers.**

**The boundary between us and the world is no longer drawn so sharply.** Our manner of life is not always prudent. Terrible scandals, also on the part of our pastors, are on the increase. While we are richer in earthly things than our fathers, we are weaker in faith and Christian love”. (*At Home in The House of My Fathers*, St. Louis: CPH, page 714; emphasis added)

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Wow! If Pfothenauer felt that way about his generation, I dare say his words are an indictment exponentially greater upon ours. We spend plenty of time lamenting the state of the world, but we have a much more difficult time recognizing the encroachment of the world’s viewpoint upon us.

Jesus preached, “Back to the Bible!” “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me” (**John 5:39**). The apostles preached, “Back to the Bible!” In fact, every great era of reform in the Church’s life has begun with the cry to repentance, and “Back to the Bible!”

The Lutheran Reformation was exactly such an event. The Lutheran Confessional Revival of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was also such an event. After a century of pastors and scholars denying that the Scriptures are the Word of God – and even that Christ is the God-Man, “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (**John 1:29**) – a revival of serious study of the Word of God began in the 1820s.

(Over)

Soon many were captivated by the truth of Scripture. In Germany, after many began reading the Word again, they read the Lutheran Confessions and came to the joyful discovery that the Confessions agree with the Word, and that, because they confessed this, they themselves were in fact, Lutheran. This happened to many of the great founders of the LCMS, including C.F.W. Walther, Freidrich Wyneken, Wilhelm Sihler and Wilhelm Loehe.

The Scriptures are God's own inspired and infallible Word. "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (**2 Peter 1:21**) Jesus Himself quoted the Old Testament as the very Word of God and as absolutely reliable and authoritative ("the mouth of God" **Matt. 4:4**; "It is written," **Matt. 21:13**; **Mark 11:17**; **Luke 19:46**; "this which is written must be fulfilled in me," **Luke 22:37**; "Have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God . . ." **Matt. 22:31-32**; and much more!). Back to the Bible!

- Can we be sure of Christ, forgiveness and eternal life? Back to the Bible! (**1 John 4:1-4**)
- How shall we treat each other in the Church? Back to the Bible! (**1 Corinthians 13**)
- Shall we share the Word of the Gospel with others? Back to the Bible! (**Luke 19:10**)
- How shall we hold up under suffering and ill health? Back to the Bible!

**(Romans 5; Hebrews 12; 1 Peter 1)**

There is no problem of faith, life, family or Church for which the Bible does not have answers. As we move toward the Synod's 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022, let's be people of the Bible.

Check out *The Lutheran Study Bible*, available from Concordia Publishing House. In the preface material, you'll find helpful tools like "How to Read and Study the Bible" and a two-year plan for reading through the whole Bible. Four chapters a day gets you through the whole Bible in two years. I even down-loaded an app on my iPhone which allows me to listen to the Scriptures while I'm in the car or at the gym.

**Back to the Bible! I challenge you !**

So, why should we, individually and as the Body of Christ, be frequently in "the Word"? "For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrew. 4:12) and "Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path" (Ps. 119:105). **To God be the Glory!**

Your fellow servant in the Lord;

Mike Brown, President

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*"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:6-7)

